



## **An Analysis of the Actual Status of Doping Attitude in South Korean Female Bodybuilders in Bodybuilding Bikini**

*Hun Ju Lee<sup>1</sup>, \*Sung Bum Ju<sup>2</sup>*

1. *Major in Health and Sports Education, Graduate School of Education, Busan National University of Education, Busan, South Korea*
2. *Department of Physical Education, Busan National University of Education, Busan, South Korea*

**\*Corresponding Author:** Email: [accent@bnue.ac.kr](mailto:accent@bnue.ac.kr)

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### **Dear Editor-in-Chief**

The fever of figure care and Mom-zzang (a Korean term for a perfect figure) has recently attracted social attraction among women in South Korea. In particular, exercise for maintaining good muscle, forming a slim waistline, being trim, and achieving a peach butt is popular in the field of bodybuilding, which emphasizes muscles. As figure care is becoming a significant concern and consumption goal among women, the bikini event in the female bodybuilding field is also attracting even greater attention. The IFBB International General Meeting officially recognized the bikini event (hereafter, bikinis) for women in South Korea in November 2010 (1).

In South Korea, female bodybuilders use dietary supplements more frequently in bikinis than in other sports (2). Dietary supplements can contain a large amount of vitamins or minerals and help to compensate for insufficient nutrients, but they can also make people prone to overconsumption. The use of dietary supplements, particularly in the context of doping, poses significant health risks. Despite this, no study has been conducted on doping attitudes related to dietary supplement intake for South Korean female bodybuilders in

bikinis. We aimed to investigate their status, shedding light on a potentially concerning issue.

A survey was conducted via Google and Naver Office, reaching out to 76 bodybuilders in bikinis who were included in the registration system for the Korean Sport and Olympic Committee from February to April 2024. The questionnaire used for the study was an adaptation of the one developed by the Korean Institute of Sports Science, which focuses on the actual use of nutritional supplements and a sense of doping (3). This rigorous methodology ensures the reliability and validity of the study's findings.

The results showed that 46 South Korean bodybuilders in bikinis (61%) had taken education to avoid doping, and the remaining 30 had no such education. Fifty-nine (78%) had no experience of being recommended or tempted to use any prohibited drug to improve performance, 17 (22%) had experienced such temptation, 64 (84%) recognized the possibility of any prohibited drug substance being detected in the supplements, 13 (16%) had no such recognition, and 54 (71%) were aware of prohibited drugs' efficacy and side effects. Two of the most frequent excuses for doping were treatment in a hospital and medica-



tion prescription; 25 (33%) had been treated or got prescription after making clear that they were subjects of a doping test.

This study has revealed that South Korean female bodybuilders in bikinis exhibit a generous attitude toward doping. These findings are not only significant in their own right but also provide new and important information for research on doping in female bodybuilders in bikinis across several countries, including South Korea. They also shed light on a previously underexplored area, enriching our understanding of the issue.

### **Conflict of interest**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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